

# Domestic Bees FAQs

An overview for homeowners



## What are the maximum number of hives I may have?

Properties must have a minimum of 4,000 sq. ft. to have an apiary.

2 hives	4,000 sq. ft. to 11,000 sq. ft
4 hives	11,001 sq. ft to 43,560 sq. ft
5 or more hives	43,560 sq. ft or more: 4 hives plus 1 additional hive per 3,000 sq. ft. of lot area over 43,560 sq. ft.

## Where may I place hives on my property?

Hives must be placed in the rear yard, and meet the following setbacks:

- 25 feet from a street, sidewalk, or a lot line
- 35 feet from adjacent houses
- 50 feet from penned/kenned animals
- 50 feet from educational facilities, child care/day-care centers, assisted living facilities, etc.

## What is involved in the care and maintenance of apiaries?

- **Water:** Fresh water must be located within 20 ft. of hives.
- **Flyway barriers:** Barriers must be placed parallel between the hive opening and within 25 ft. of lot lines. Wall and solid fence barriers must be between 6ft.-7ft. tall. If vegetation barriers are used, the plants must be at least 4 ft. tall, but may grow taller than 7ft.

## What is a flyway barrier?

- A flyway barrier is a barrier consisting of either a wall, solid fence, dense vegetation intended to force bees to fly at least six feet above the hive.

## Can I sell the honey I get from my hives?

- Yes! Sale operations from home-based business need to first obtain a Home-Occupation permit and business license. The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has more information about honey sales:  
<https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/plant-industry-services-beekeeping-apiary-inspection.shtml>.

## What are the application requirements?

- **Zoning Certification:** The application is found on the City website, and has a \$50 application fee.
- **House Location Survey:** This is a scaled survey created by a Land Surveyor that shows an aerial view of your property. The proposed apiary location should be drawn on it, along with the distance to the property lines.
- **Bee and Apiary Form:** This form is found on the City website and indicated the applicants understanding of the City code section for apiaries.

## When is a permit not required?

- If existing hives are replaced.

For more information, email [permitstatus@manassasva.gov](mailto:permitstatus@manassasva.gov), call 703-257-8247, or visit [manassasva.gov/permits](http://manassasva.gov/permits)

City of Manassas Community Development Department

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## I no longer wish to have an apiary. How do I safely remove a domestic bee colony?

- The Prince William regional Beekeepers Association maintains a list of services that can safely remove a domestic bee colony:  
<https://pwrbeekeepers.com/swarms-and-removal/>

## What resources are available to learn more about domestic bees?

- The Prince William Regional Beekeepers Association has a wealth of resources concerning the keeping of domestic honeybees at [www.pwrbeekeepers.com](http://www.pwrbeekeepers.com).
- The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has additional information and resources:  
<https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/plant-industry-services-beekeeping-apiary-inspection.shtml>